An Essay on

Epilepsy

Respectfully Submitted
to the Faculty of the
Homoeopathic Medical college

of

Pennsylvania

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By Joseph B. White

of Pennsylvania

From a petitioner for the degree of M. D. no great display of practical medical knowledge can be expected. All the information he possesses must necessarily be obtained from the experience of others; for he has been entirely engaged in examining and comparing theories. making himself acquainted with the wonderful mechanism of man. tracing from the centre of life the beautiful filements that carry its numerous messges through the various parts of this great machinery; And also familarizing himself with the not less pleasing chemical laws. In fact he is but a mere theorizer in detail; and it is only now that he asks the authority and privaledge

of entering that degree of the profession.
Into that Scholarship, where he may
compare theoretical with practical
truths, and with wonder and delight
behold the power of the Homeopathic
law; over that great destroyer of the
human race; disease.

Then only is it that he can witness
for himself the operation of medicines
in accordance with that great and
fundamental law of cure. Similia
Similibus curantur. And mark the
results of diferent modes of treatment
And from the close and carful
Study of diseases as they yield to his
Skill and to the power of his art
gather that practical knowledge,
that will enable him to add to the

rich Stores of medical Science which
experience has already garnered.

The Subject your petitioner
proposes to write upon is perhaps one
of the most to be dreaded by the
human family. It is "Epilepsy"
It has ben the Subject of the
most carefull consideration by our
greatest physicians from the days
of Hippocrates down to the pres=
= ent time

Epilepsy whether consid ed in
its immediate phenomina, or in
its remote consequences: is unques=
= tionably one of the worst and most
distressing and deplorable of hu=
= man maladys. Its tendency to
impair the understanding to pro=

= duce imbecility, and even total abolition of the rational powers leads often to a condition infinitely more lamentable than death itself. So frightful and distressing a disease could not fail to attract the particular attention of the physicians of every age.

And we accordingly find minutely described, and its nature and treatment extensively discussed in the works of the Greek and Roman physicians.

Hippocrates describes Epilepsy under the name of Morbus Sacer a name which was given to it from its Supposed origen; it being gen= erally regarded at his day, as

an infection of the Gods. or demon
influence. Aristotle treats of it under the
name of. Morbus Herculeus.
because Hercules is said to have
been affected with this disease.
The most comon appellation
of this affection among the
Roman Physicians. however
was Morbus. comitialis. We
never theless find it mention=
=ed als under various other
names in there writings.
such as Morbus Sonticus. Morbus=
=caducus. Morbus divinus. Morbus
puerilis.

In the sacred writings epilep=
=tic persons were called lunatic
(Soporous, and convulsive affections

are so closely allied to each other, both in relation to there general phenomina and there pathol-
=ogical character, that it is extre-
=mely difficult to give an expl.it definition of any one of them.

Epilepsy may, perhaps, be defi-
=ned a disease primarily seated in the nervous system, manifested by convulsions recuring at uncertain periods in paroxysms, accompanied by a temporary loss of consciousness, sense and voluntary motion, and terminating in syncope.

The attack is more frequently with-
=out than, with premonitory sym-
=ptoms. When the latter occurs they are various. as languor pain

or giddiness of the head, disturbed sleep, dimness of sight, distension of the veins of the neck, nausea and vomiting, flashes of light before the eyes, during the paroxysm the muscles of one side of the body are commonly more severely agitated than those on the other, and those concerned in the performance of respiration are always more or less implicated. The eyes are hideously convulsed, and turned in various directions; but at length become fixed, so that the whites of them alone are seen; the fingers are firmly clenched and the muscles of the jaws are often spasmodically affected, in consequence

of which the tongue is sometimes lacerated by being thrust out immidiatly before the Sudden and violent approximation of the teeth, the mouth is frequently filled with phlegm, which is expelled with considerable force in a frothy State, the face becomes a dark red, or livid color, or it is alternatly pale and red. Comparatively few patients die in a fit, but one after another in rapid Succession, and with increasing intensity, untill a comatose State ensues, and the patient sinks. Idiotcy is an occasional melencholy result of this distressing malady

Frequently, the fit attacks suddenly and the Subject is Struck down without any warning; At other times it is preceded by indisposition, vertigo, and Stupor.
At times before the loss of consciousness occurs a Sensation of a cold vapour is felt, hence called aura epileptica.
This appears to rise in some part of the body proceeds towards the head, and as soon as it has reached the brain the patient falls down. The ordinary duration of a fit is from 5 to 20 minuts, at others, it is protracted for hours. In all cases there is a loss of Sensation Sudden falling down distortion of the eyes and face; grinding of the teeth; foaming at the mouth, convulsions of the limbs, difficult respiration generally Stertorous, with Sometimes involun-

- tary discharge of faeces and urine. After the fit the patient retains not the least recolection of what has passed but remains for some time, affected with head-ach, Stupor and lassitude. Pulse weak, frequent and irregular. after the paroxysms have subsided the patient usually sleeps soundly for six, eight, or ten hours, and a sen- - sation of languor and exhaustion, or weight and other uncomfortable feelings in the head are complai- - ned of.

Causes- Organic affections of the brain, Abnormal osseous deposites within the cranium. Ill formed cranium, diseases of the heart. Fractures of the Skull, violent -

mental disturbances, Secondary Syph-
- hiles. Mercurial affections. derangem-
- ent of the Stomach and bowels.
Onanism, Suppressed Eruptions.
Excesses in the use of liquors, and the
Sight of other Epileptics.

Prognoses - is usuly favourable
under Homoeopathic treatment in
cases arising from Symptomatic and
traumatic causes. But in the Idio-
- pathic form it is much more difficult
to cure, or indeed I may say in many
cases it is incureable.

Treatment - in the first place the causes
must be sought after and if possible
removed. during the paroxysm but lit-
- tle can be done, but as the tongue is
liable to be injured by the teeth, this -

Jaws may be kept open by putting a cork or piece of wood between them.
It is between the paroxysms that the great effort must be made.
The following remedies are those which are most frequently required in the generality of cases—
Belladonna. Hyoscyamus. Ignatia Nux vomica Pulsatilla Cuprum. Veratrum. Stramonium. Sulpher. Phosforous Mercurius Coffea Arnica Arsenicum Chamomilla.
Belladonna is indicated where there is great irritability of the whole nervous System, the patient is Startled at the merest trifle convulsive movements of the mouth, muscles of the face and eyes, dilated pupils congestion of

the head, Vertigo. deep redness of the face, heat and bloatedness of the face convulsed or fixed eyes. cramps in the larynx and throat; and in cases which have been caused by fright, or other mental emotions. Ignatia is of equal importance here.

Hyoscyamus - bluish color of the face bloatedness, foming at the mouth prominent eyes, convulsive movements of the muscles of the neck and arms, or of the whole body, retraction of the thumbs. - renewal of the fits, on endeavoring to swallow the least drops of liquid. Boring of the head in to the pillow, throwing the head back, Bell. has this symtom also unnoticed emission of urine, deep and

lethargic sleep with snoring, foaming at the mouth.

Ignatia- convulsive movements of the limbs, eyes, eyelids, muscles of the face and lips throwing back of the head- retraction of the thumbs red and bluish face, or redness of one side and paleness of the other, Spasms of the throat, with threatning Suffocation, and difficult deglutition, loss of consciousness yawning drowsy sleep, great anxiety deep sighing, between, or before the attacks; daily paroxysms.

In Chronic cases, Sulphur Calcarea and Silicea. Sulphur is often preceded by a sensation as if a mouse, or some other small animal were running over the

muscles, cries Stiffness of the body, fits excited by cool air.

Nux vomica and Opium, where it is brought on by intemperance and debauchery, with a sensation of torpor and numbness in the limbs - renewal of the fits by angry emotion, vomiting, profuse perspiration and constipation.

Cuprum - commencement of the paroxysm in the fingers or toes, or in the arms, retraction of the thumbs loss of consciousness and of Speech. Salivation - Sometimes frothy, redness of the face and eyes, recurrence of the fits every month especially at the catamenia